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December 5, 1963

Dear Pete:

I read your report of the November 19 and November 26 meetings of the Deputy Political Advisors and noticed that you are discussing the question of FREE STYLE. The recent autobahn incidents have obviously led to a certain amount of discontent with this plan. I think, however, that we should be careful not to reopen this plan lightly or jeopardize its concept. Although FREE STYLE was obviously not suitable as a follow-on to the rules of conduct when only one convoy was stuck, we do believe that assembling FREE STYLE may have served a useful purpose in conveying to the Soviets our concern. In addition, we do not preclude that the situation might have developed in such a way as to make the question of the use of FREE STYLE arise. Having FREE STYLE assembled may also have helped the British agree to send a convoy, since this was a less unpleasant alternative than the use of FREE STYLE.

I think most of us have never had any illusions about FREE STYLE. It is a limited force with a limited objective and hence limited potential value. I suspect in any event that the key factor in any decision to use FREE STYLE will not be the situation which prevails on the autobahn, but whether governments are prepared to face the consequences of the Soviets stopping FREE STYLE, such as measures contemplated for Phase II.

The FREE STYLE plan was put together over a number of years with great pain and reconciles the divergent views of the various governments and agencies concerned. If anyone has concrete proposals as to how FREE STYLE might be improved or proposals for plans which might supplement FREE STYLE, we would be happy to hear of them. In the meantime, I am sure that you, Jim Sutterlin, and General Chapman will resist any efforts to pull the plant up just to see how long the roots are.

Sincerely,

John C. Ausland

CC/Mr. Sutterlin
General Chapman

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